
How to Read the Budget

INTRODUCTION

The County Executive's Recommended Operating Budget and Public Services Program contains a comprehensive picture of the Executive's recommendations for the budget year beginning July 1, including changes from the previous fiscal year, department accomplishments and initiatives, and performance measures.

This book is published annually and transmitted to the County Council by March 15 as required by the County Charter. The final budget is approved by the County Council in late May and published by mid-July. All publications are available on the County's website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

In addition, Montgomery County also offers an open-data budget publication that is easy to use, interactive, searchable, sharable, translatable and mobile. This powerful site not only provides the detailed granular level data that make up Montgomery County's Budget, but also serves as a high-level view of the County's Fiscal standing. The Open Budget site can be found at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/openbudget.

CONTENTS OF THE OPERATING BUDGET DOCUMENT

The major components of the Recommended Operating Budget and Public Services Program are described below in order of appearance in this document.

County Executive's Budget Message and Highlights

The County Executive's message summarizes the financial status of the County, major recommended expenditure priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, and how the budget is funded. The highlights provide a listing of major program initiatives and changes recommended in the Executive's budget.

Operating Budget Process

This chapter provides a brief introduction and refers to the legal requirements for the annual budget process, and includes descriptions of government structure and government accounting methods and funds.

Fiscal Policy

This chapter describes the policies of Montgomery County government with respect to taxes, spending, and debt management, including short-term policies and initiatives. The purpose of fiscal policy is to provide guidance for sound public practice in the planning and financing of public expenditures, including the policy assumptions under which budget and tax decisions are made.

Revenues

This chapter provides assumptions used to project revenues for funding the budget, including:

- demographic, economic, and fiscal trends that identify potential impacts on the County's overall expenditure requirements and revenues over the next six years, and
- detailed information and estimates on revenue categories and major sources of funds.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

This chapter describes the impacts of the annual Capital Budget and biennial Capital Improvements Program (CIP) on the Operating Budget and six-year Public Services Program (PSP), including a list of major CIP projects and funding sources for all agencies. The six-year CIP implies on-going commitment of resources in the PSP for: long- and short-term debt service; cash for non-debt eligible expenditures and debt avoidance; and costs to equip, open, staff, and maintain newly constructed facilities.

Debt Service

Debt service is the amount the County must pay each year for the principal and interest on the County's bonded and other indebtedness. Debt service is presented both in terms of the specific bond allocations by category and fund and by sources of revenue, including six-year projections of debt service requirements.

Workforce/Compensation

This chapter includes detailed information about negotiated settlements with certified employee bargaining units and unrepresented employees. General data related to group insurance, disability protection, and employee retirement plans are also presented.

Agency Summaries

The County Executive is required by the Charter to include recommendations on agency budgets for which the County Council sets tax rates or approves budgets. The Executive recommends expenditure levels and funding support, where applicable, for the budgets of the Public Schools, Montgomery College, the Montgomery County and bi-county (administration) portions of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), and the Montgomery County and bi-county portions of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. A summary of the Housing Opportunities Commission budget is also included, containing the Executive's recommended operating budget appropriation. In addition, a section describing the Montgomery County Revenue Authority is provided, as copies of the Revenue Authority budget are not available until after May 1 of each calendar year, as required by County Code.

County Government Recommended Department Budgets

The recommended budgets for departments and offices of the County Government are provided for the following:

- Legislative Branch (the County Council and legislative offices and boards);
- Judicial Branch (Circuit Court and State's Attorney), and
- Executive Branch (departments with functions related to General Government; Public Safety; Transportation; Health and Human Services; Libraries, Culture, and Recreation; Community Development and Housing; Environment; and Other County Functions).

The presentations include: the department's mission statement; linkage to County result areas; accomplishments and initiatives; performance measures; description and cost of programs; recommended expenditure, revenue, and workforce allocations for the department; recommended changes for next fiscal year's budget; charges to other departments, and information about future fiscal impacts. For more detailed information about department displays, see the section on "Department Budget Presentations" below.

Non-Departmental Accounts (NDAs)

The Non-Departmental Accounts section contains expenses essential to the operation of the County government which either do not fall within the functional assignment of any department or agency or provide for expenditures related to more than one department or agency. Examples include various grants to municipal governments, contributions to other funds, County government memberships (e.g., Maryland Association of Counties), and certain legally-mandated programs. Responsibility for administration of NDAs is assigned by the Chief Administrative Officer to specific departments. Although classified as an NDA, all utilities expenditures of the County government are displayed in a separate section to provide combined data on costs by energy type and user departments.

Budget Summary Schedules

The Summary Schedules section contains aggregate fiscal data for all agencies for which the County Council sets tax rates, makes levies, or approves programs and/or budgets. The schedules include expenditure and funding totals by agency, department, government function, and source of funding, with both dollar amounts and staffing (i.e. full-time equivalents (FTEs) and positions). Revenues are described and detailed by agency, fund, and type. Ten-year historical trends are also included for major expenditure categories, revenue sources, the government workforce, and tax rates.

Glossary

The Glossary contains definitions of terms and acronyms commonly used throughout both the PSP and CIP budget documents.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

For each department within Montgomery County government and for most agency summaries, the budget presentation includes:

Mission Statement: the overall purpose of the department (or major division), including the goals or results it expects to achieve for the community or its function in the County government.

Budget Overview: recommended appropriations for the department, with changes from the prior fiscal year, in dollars, full time equivalents, and percentage change.

Linkages to County Result Areas: denotes which of the County Executive's eight result areas relate to the department.

Performance Measures: provides key measures that apply to the department as a whole or to multiple programs. Each measure gives actual data for the past two completed fiscal years, an estimate for the current fiscal year, and targets for the next two fiscal years. These targets represent the department's principal performance goals. Program performance measures that relate to only one program are listed with the relevant program as noted below.

Accomplishments and Initiatives: provides a summary of major department accomplishments completed in the last year and the anticipated results of the recommended funding for next fiscal year. In addition, productivity improvements within the department are described.

Program Contacts: department and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) contacts for the budget, including phone numbers.

Program Descriptions: provides a descriptive narrative of the program, including, as applicable:

- Nature, functions, and features of program activity;
- The public need to which the program responds;
- Who or what benefits from the program activity; and
- What the resources allocated will provide to the community.

Program Performance Measures: lists performance measures that apply to only one of the department's programs. Actual performance data are shown for the previous two fiscal years, as well as estimates for the current fiscal year and targets for the next two fiscal years. The FY16 and FY17 figures represent performance goals for the relevant program.

Program Recommended Changes: a table displays the recommended program expenditures and FTEs for next fiscal year compared to the current year's approved budget, including an itemization of key changes within individual programs based on recommended budget actions. Budget changes that relate to a unique program are listed individually within each program recommended changes chart. Budget changes that affect more than one program, such as compensation changes, are summarized in a multi-program adjustment item for each affected program.

Budget Summary: summary data for the department, including actual expenditures for the prior fiscal year, the approved budget and estimated expenditures for the current fiscal year, and the County Executive's recommended budget for the coming fiscal year. The presentation includes, by fund, expenditures within appropriation category (Personnel Costs, Operating Expenses, Capital Outlay, and Debt Service); personnel requirements (full-time and part-time positions and FTEs); and related revenue sources. Appropriation categories and related components within the Budget Summary include:

- Salaries and Wages: the cost of all salary expenses for both full-time and part-time positions, including other personnel cost adjustments (e.g., overtime, shift differential, multilingual pay, etc.).
- Employee Benefits: social security, group insurance, and retirement. Additional information regarding employee benefits may be found in the Workforce/Compensation chapter of this document.
- Operating Expenses: those costs required to support the operations of the agency, including such items as contracted services, printing, motor pool, and office supplies.
- Debt Service (for M-NCPPC, Parking Lot Districts, Solid Waste Disposal, Liquor Control, and Montgomery Housing Initiative funds only): the annual payment of principal and interest on bonded indebtedness (for both general obligation and other debt) incurred by departments/agencies funded by a Special or Enterprise fund.
- Capital Outlay: funding for the acquisition of fixed assets that have a value of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year.

Personnel categories within the Budget Summary include full- and part-time positions as well as full-time equivalents (FTEs). FTEs reflect staff time charged to the department's operating budget. One FTE is the equivalent to 2,080 work hours or 260 workdays.

Related revenues listed in the Budget Summary are generated or received by the department as a direct result of its activities. These include user fees, permits and licenses, grants, intergovernmental aid and reimbursements, and other miscellaneous revenues.

Recommended Changes: describes department-wide expenditure and FTE changes from the current year's approved budget to next fiscal year's recommended budget. The crosswalk includes:

- Additional items funded in next year's recommended budget for new or expanded services.

- Decreases from last year's approved budget relating to reduction in service or elimination of one-time funding in the base for printers, servers, etc.
- Proposed compensation adjustments.
- Group insurance and retirement rate adjustments.
- Rate adjustments for other expenses such as motor pool, printing and mail, risk management, etc.
- Increases or reductions in charges to or from other departments (including charges to the CIP).
- Shifts in resources to another department.
- Other personnel cost adjustments, including changes related to annualization of current year increments; position or job class reclassifications; staff turnover; and lapse changes.
- Other operating expense changes, including inflation adjustments for contracts, rent, etc.

The presentation is organized under two categories: first by items with service impacts, then by other adjustments with no service impacts. Under each category, the items are organized by largest to smallest dollar value change. For items that affect a single program, the name of the relevant program is shown in parentheses. If no program is shown, the adjustment affects several programs.

A verb precedes each recommended crosswalk item. The following verbs describe service impact changes:

Verb and Definition
Add – New funding for services that presently do not exist.
Enhance – More of an existing service or improvement to the quality of an existing service.
Eliminate – Total elimination of an existing service, with no anticipation of the service being provided by another entity.
Reduce – Reduction but not elimination of an existing service.
Restore - To reverse a recommendation to Shift or Reduce a service.

The following verbs describe other adjustments with no service impact changes:

Verb and Definition
Increase Cost – Additional expenditures to provide the same quantity and scope of existing services (e.g., compensation or benefit increases).
Decrease Cost – Reduction in cost without service impact (e.g., elimination of one-time items approved in the current fiscal year).
Shift – The transfer of service delivery and attendant costs between County Government departments; or elimination or reduction of a service, with the anticipation that the service will be provided by another entity (e.g., State, private sector).
Replace – County assumption of responsibilities previously provided by a non-county entity or funded by a restricted grant (e.g. Federal/State/private).
Technical Adjustment – Used to indicate shifts between expenditure categories or changes in FTEs with no net budget impact.

Program Summary: listing of each program, including current fiscal year approved and next fiscal year's recommended expenditures and FTEs.

Charges to Other Departments: provides listing of Personnel and Operating Expenses charged to other departments or to the capital budget. The amounts in the table are not reflected in the expenditure or FTE figures displayed in the Budget Summary.

Future Fiscal Impacts: provides potential future fiscal impacts of the department's programs by fund over a six-year period when measured against the Executive's recommended budget for the next fiscal year.

Annualization of Personnel Costs: identifies next fiscal year's annualized cost for the lapsed portion of new recommended positions as most new positions are budgeted for only a portion of the fiscal year.

Six-Year Public Services Fiscal Plan: estimates of costs over the six-year planning period are included as overall projections of total resources and use of resources for many Montgomery County non-tax supported funds such as the Permitting Services Fund and Solid Waste Disposal and Collection Funds. These figures are based on major known commitments, and the projected assumptions are explained.

Service Maps and Other Exhibits: additional information (e.g., location of Police, Fire, Library, or Recreation facilities) relevant to the department is provided, as applicable.